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LETTER DATED 31 OCTOBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LIBERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to present my compliments and, upon the instructions of my Government, to forward herewith a policy statement issued on 21 October 1997 on the situation in Sierra Leone (see annex).

I should be grateful if the statement could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) William BULL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement concerning foreign policy on Sierra Leone issued on 21 October 1997 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Liberia

The Government of the Republic of Liberia views with major concern the 25 May 1997 military coup in the neighbouring State of Sierra Leone and the ongoing hostilities. Considering the successful implementation of the disarmament process and the holding of free and fair democratic elections, the need to consolidate peace and security in Liberia is of the highest national priority. It is the view of the Government that any military intensification of the crisis in Sierra Leone will have the potential of spilling into Liberia and Guinea and thus destabilizing the two neighbouring States and further exacerbating the humanitarian and refugee crisis in the region. Intelligence reports available to the Government of Liberia indicate that Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/Revolutionary United Front (AFRC/RUF) forces control major border points between Liberia and Sierra Leone and that the risk of hot pursuit into Liberia against Kamajors by the AFRC/RUF is high.

The Government of the Republic of Liberia therefore identifies the following national interest and foreign policy objectives with regard to the situation in neighbouring Sierra Leone: (a) peace and security; (b) humanitarian and refugee problems; (c) compliance with international law and agreements; (d) protection and promotion of democratization; and (e) conflict resolution:

(a) Peace and security. In order to contain the hostilities in Sierra Leone and to prevent a spillover into Liberia, the Government will direct the immediate closure of the Liberian border with Sierra Leone. Furthermore, the Government will not permit any military engagement involving the use of force out of its territory by any group against Sierra Leone, except where explicitly sanctioned by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and approved by the United Nations Security Council and the Government of Liberia;

(b) Humanitarian and refugee problems. Concerted efforts will be made to ensure access of humanitarian relief to refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as to ensure their safety and protection;

(c) Compliance with international law and agreement. The Government will ensure compliance with the principles of international law and support agreements reached on the Sierra Leone crisis by ECOWAS. In conformity with Security Council resolution 1132 (1997), the Government will take action with a view to implementing effectively the measures described in the resolution. Furthermore, any act of violation of the provisions of resolution 1132 (1997) will be reported to the Secretary-General of the United Nations;

(d) Protection and promotion of democratization. All efforts shall be made for the restoration of constitutional order in Sierra Leone. However, in order to avoid the intensification of hostilities and any spillover into neighbouring States, as well as in consideration of the ineffectiveness of the use of force in bringing lasting peace to Sierra Leone, the Government of the

Republic of Liberia will not support the use of force as a means to restore constitutional order, except where, as a last resort, it is decided by ECOWAS and approved by the Security Council. All parties are therefore urged to reach a political settlement in consonance with the expectations of the international community. The Government will therefore wholeheartedly assist in achieving a political settlement in Sierra Leone with the sole objective of restoring constitutional rule;

(e) Conflict resolution. Noting the initiatives undertaken in Abidjan, which led to the conclusion of the Abidjan Agreement, the Government supports the principles of the Agreement and encourages continuous dialogue on the basis of those principles to ensure sustainable peace and security in Sierra Leone.